

Modernism and Miracles

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IN the following pages we shall consider the bed-rock foundation of Modernist scepticism—its often unreasoning, and always unreasonable, rejection of miracles. The whole edifice of unbelief in the Christ of the Creeds rests on the supposition that miracles do not happen, never have happened, and, in the judgment of very many Modernists, never can happen.

Obviously the non-miraculous Christianity of Modernism is a caricature, at best, of the Christianity of the Catholic Church. Though Modernism claims to keep the kernel of true Christianity, while discarding only the husk, yet in its denial of the articles of the Creeds it is the very kernel of the Faith that is rejected.

Etymologically, the word *miracle* means a "wonder," an astonishing event; theologically, it includes more than the merely "wonderful." All miracles are "wonderful," but not all wonderful or astonishing things are miracles. The element of wonder is closely connected with the astonishment which arises from the experience of something that is utterly unusual, that is opposed to the general sequence of events as they are found in the experience of him who beholds the wonder.

Airplanes are causes of wondering amazement, perhaps even of worship, to the savages who see them for the first time sailing through the sky. Modernists would consider all miracles to be purely natural events to which the ignorance and credulity of unscientific ages gave a supernatural interpretation. They will not allow that God ever, in the whole history of the universe, has asserted His power by a genuine supernatural intervention.

With regard to the origin of the universe, they usually maintain a significant silence. Obviously it falls outside the sphere of scientific observation and experience. Yet many

seem to regard the material universe as being necessarily eternal and indestructible, thus escaping the miracle of creation, the production of the world *ex nihilo sui et subiecti*.

Modernists, generally speaking, would declare that they reject the exaggerated Immanence of Pantheism, as well as the exaggerated Transcendence of the God of the Deists, but they seem to oscillate between these two extremes, rather than to hold fixedly to the sound middle position of Catholic philosophy and theology. One of the more prominent English Modernists, the Lady Margaret professor of divinity at Cambridge, says: "The Creator is not separated from His creatures: they do not exist apart from Him. They have their origin in the will and love of God." This is quite correct so far. But he continues: "They are counterparts of that will and love, as *necessary to the existence of God* as He is to theirs. Neither is complete without the other." To make the existence of the universe, of creatures, "necessary to the existence of God," to say that God is not complete without creatures, is to utter the pantheistic heresy. If necessary to God, they are eternal as God is eternal, and the primeval miracle of creation out of nothing must be set aside, and the first article of the Creed denied. Obviously there is no place for miracle in a determinist pantheistic philosophy: and non-miraculous Modernism tends to Pantheism.

RENAN'S FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

I may quote here the well-known words of Renan, for they are still an accepted Modernist principle of criticism. "It is evident that the Gospels are in part legendary, because they are interlarded with miracles and the supernatural"; and again we have his frank admission of his principles as a critic, in the words: "I say that the Gospels are legends, not because it has been proved to me that the Gospels do not deserve an unqualified belief, but because they narrate miracles." "That which guides us in the difficult paths of criticism is the principle, for us indisputable, that the supernatural is impossible. We do not discuss the supernatural, for it is impossible." The English philosopher, Hume, had already said: "We may establish as a *maxim* that no human testimony can have force to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation of any system of theology." Elsewhere the same writer makes "absolute impossibility"

and "miraculous nature" become synonymous expressions. If Renan and those Modernists who use similar language are right, there is no use examining evidence for any alleged miracle, for it is useless to examine alleged evidence for the existence of the intrinsically impossible. John Stuart Mill took a sounder philosophic position when he said: "We cannot conclude absolutely that the miraculous theory must be at once rejected. Once admit a God, and the production of an effect by His direct volition must be reckoned with as a serious possibility"; and the hard-headed Scotsman, Principal Shairp, sums up the common-sense view of the matter by saying: "The statement that miracles are in themselves impossible, *being a wholly groundless assumption*, the question of their actual occurrence becomes one of purely historical evidence." He here puts his finger on the fact that renders rationalistic criticism valueless—the fact admitted by Renan in the words: "The denial of the miraculous, and of the inspiration of Scripture, is not with us the *result* of exegesis: *these denials precede all exegesis*." It is an unreasonable *præjudicium* which vitiates their criticism.

I may here quote the weighty authority of two learned Anglican Bishops on this point. Doctor Gore, lately retired from the See of Oxford, says: "These critics approach their task with a strong bias, having determined that *there can occur no real miracles*, so that they are bound to reject any strictly miraculous incidents. . . . A critic of the Gospels who refuses miracles is bound to be revolutionary." And the late Bishop Creighton sums up the position by saying: "The destructive criticism of the New Testament rests on the supposition that miracles do not happen."

REASONS FOR REJECTION OF THE MIRACULOUS

But let us turn to the actual reasons which some Modernists have put forth to justify their rejection of the miraculous. Modernists in general follow what older rationalists have laid down. Sabatier, Tyrrell, Loisy, and others inferred that to admit miracles would be to degrade the Creator to the level of a secondary cause. Voltaire had said, and Anatole France and others repeat, that miracles would imply either a lack of wisdom or of omnipotence in God, or a condescension which would be incompatible with the Divine dignity. English Modernists all put forward a view

of miracle which is quite other than that of Catholic philosophy and theology.

Here is the way in which the Rev. C. F. Russell, at the Oxford Conference of 1924, states his reason for rejecting the miraculous. Others express the same idea in similar language.

To admit miracle [he says], amounts to saying that the Divine Wisdom, which is expressed in the order of nature, was not capable of providing for all emergencies, but is sometimes—to use an everyday phrase—"taken by surprise." To me, at least, the conception of a God who so needs to intervene, is less lofty and worship-inspiring than that of One who knows His own mind from all eternity, and whose method in nature is, like Himself, "the same yesterday, today, and for ever."

Anatole France made out that miracles would connote an imperfection in God's work—which would seem to require continual tinkering and readjustments like a worn-out motor car—always needing the attention of the repair-shop.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN MIRACLES

It is curious how few Modernists pay any attention to the Divine purpose which is seen to be the justifying reason for interference with physical uniformity. The moral good of a single soul so far outweighs the physical "discord" produced by a miracle as to make it worth while on the part of a holy and loving God. This apotheosis of physical law—which would regard the miraculous cure of an incurable disease by Christ's mercy as a sort of physical blasphemy—is a strange superstition of scientists.

Certain scientists seem driven into a panic at the thought of the mere possibility of miracle: they fear that the cosmos would become chaos and scientific certainty would be at an end if a single miracle be admitted to have happened at any time since the beginning. Thus a speaker at the Oxford Modernist Conference of 1924 said:

If this disturbing factor [miracle] be introduced, the student of natural processes can no longer count upon like causes contributing twice in succession to like results. Nor can he enjoy any confidence that the causes to which he attributes the behavior of objects are the true causes. Thus the miraculous or supernatural is equivalent for the man of science to an incalculable factor which renders accurate and systematic investigations impossible.

Here he is but echoing the materialistic objections of Tyndall. That Victorian physicist—he was no philosopher—said: “Assuming the power of free prayer to produce changes in external nature, it necessarily follows that natural laws are more or less at the mercy of man’s volition and no conclusion founded on the assumed permanence of these laws would be worthy of confidence.”

But what right has he to assume this to be a power of free prayer?

An American Modernist, Bishop Lawrence of Massachusetts, introduces a novel objection, the force of which it is difficult to grasp. He says: “Modern science has convinced us that a *just* God would not and could not autocratically break through the laws of nature and work wonders.” And another American, Dr. Leighton Parks, says that “belief in miracles degrades religion from a supreme spiritual experience to an acceptance of *belief in a non-rational universe*.” Duboc declares that “a miracle is lawlessness and for this reason it means the abolition of all science based on principles,” and Dean Inge goes so far as to say that “the miraculous is welcome to some minds *because they dislike law and order*.” He forgets to add that the one Church which clings faithfully to belief in miracle—the Catholic Church—is the one in which discipline, law, and order are most evident.

THE LAWS OF NATURE

It is commonly said by Modernists like Dean Inge that the traditional belief in miracles originated and endured through ignorance of the fact that there were such things as laws of nature. Loisy makes much of this. Yet, the following passage shows that even in the days of St. Augustine the concept of “laws of nature” was not unknown. He says:

Omnis iste naturae usitatissimus cursus habet quasdam naturales leges suas . . . et elementa mundi huius corporei habent definitam vim qualitatemque suam, quid unumquodque valeat vel non valeat, quid de quo fieri possit vel non possit . . . Super hunc autem modum cursumque rerum naturalem potestas Creatoris habet apud se, posse facere de his aliud quam eorum quasi seminales rationes habent (*De Gen. ad litt.*, l. 9, c. 17, n. 32; ML. 34, 406).

Thus St. Augustine, long before the vaunted Victorian age of scientific discovery, most perfectly describes the re-

lation of creation to its Creator, and recognizes that God has imposed on nature the laws it is to follow, these laws constituting the principle from which nature draws its uniformity of action. But St. Augustine reminds his readers that above this natural course, the Creator has power to produce in creatures effects which are outside their intrinsic capacity. He can supplement the ordinary forces of nature by His Divine power and wisdom, as a human cause can pick up a pen and, using it as an instrument, perform with it what it is unable to perform by itself. Such supplementary interventions of Divine power, going beyond the ordinary cooperation of the Creator with the ordinary natural activities of the creature, are seen in the case of some miracles.

In other miracles, it is perhaps by withholding His cooperation, and so preventing natural forces from acting according to their nature to produce their effects, that God effects the supernatural marvel. Others, again, manifest the creative power of God. These three explanations would seem to cover all cases of miracles.

Looking back on the objections which have been quoted so far, we see that they all depend on a false supposition about God's nature and His activity in creation, and they forget the object which He has in view in working a miracle. Miracles are eternally planned in the same all-wise decree which imposes both the natural laws, and the occasional exceptions to the uniformity of these laws which are decreed for some worthy, loving, moral purpose. This is ignored by nearly all Modernists, and it is the solution of many of these difficulties.

Miracles, then, are not "Divine after-thoughts"; God is not "taken by surprise." They are not necessary to remedy some unforeseen defect in His work. God is not a limited "constitutional Monarch," nor is there any element of "capriciousness" or of indecision. Nor, again, are all men "equal" before God, in the sense that He is not free to select some individuals for exceptional favor, as Sabatier suggests. The idea that chaos would result in the cosmos if there were a single miracle is ridiculous. Miracles are always so utterly exceptional that their occurrence can be practically set aside in calculating on the future. Catholic astronomers, who believe in the possibility of miracles, will go across the world to view an eclipse of the sun with no anxiety as to

its failing to appear punctually, though they know God could absolutely interfere by miracle. Natural laws are not "more or less at the mercy of man's volition"—for man's volition is not the cause of miracle. Nor is God's *justice* involved. He did no injustice to the flames of the fiery furnace, when He prevented them burning the three youths, as recorded in the Old Testament!

IS THE MIRACULOUS SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY?

M. Le Roy says it is not the question of God's power, but of the "conceivability" of miracle that must be examined. *Dieu peut tout sauf l'absurde. Le miracle n'est-il pas absurde? Voilà le problème.* A few English-speaking Modernists agree with him, and here we come to a definite philosophical consideration. Is "miracle" a self-contradictory concept—e.g., like a "square circle" or a "holy blasphemy"? If so, God's omnipotence could not perform it, for it is intrinsically incapable of being actualized. If it is unthinkable, i. e., untrue, it is impossible even for omnipotence. Only that which is true can be real.

If the metaphysical and physical orders are so identified that the natural laws of physics have the same kind of intrinsic necessity as the laws of mathematics, if they result from the very essence of physical existences, then miracle would be unthinkable, absurd, self-contradictory, and it would be useless to examine evidence for any alleged miracle. This confusion exists in the minds of many Modernists and is revealed in their utterances. Physical laws, which are formulated by inductive reasoning from experience—an experience which can never be complete—do not involve the same necessary, eternal uniformity which, e. g., deductive reasoning gives us with regard to mathematical conclusions. Two plus two always and everywhere must equal four. The half of a quantity must always, everywhere be less than the whole. A "square circle" is essentially impossible. These truths depend radically on the necessary *being and truth* of God. But when we come to physical laws and the uniformity of nature, we are dealing with necessities which depend on the *free will* of God—necessities which are imposed by that free will on creatures as their normal, natural mode of existence and activity. The same free will which makes, e. g., material bodies attract one another with a force varying in inverse proportion to the square of their distances

from each other, may in a particular instance and for some worthy moral purpose, suspend the application of the law or even reverse it for a moment into a law of repulsion instead of attraction.

There is nothing in the very *concept* of matter which essentially demands that it attract rather than dispel. But there *is* something in the concept of a square which essentially excludes the idea of a circle, and prevents the possibility of there being a square circle.

The late Rev. Percy Stickney Grant, a well-known New York Modernist, in a public letter to his bishop, in which he attempted to justify his disbelief in the miracles of the Creeds, said:

I cannot love God with my mind and at the same time believe that the laws of nature were *ever* violated; for the simple reason that God Himself has taught me, as He is teaching all our sons and daughters in every modern university of the Western World today, that those laws are *immutable throughout eternity*.

In declaring the laws "immutable throughout eternity," a professor passes from the sphere of physics to metaphysics, from science to philosophy, and at the same time he is falling into the elementary logical fallacy of arguing from *non esse* to *non posse*—from the fact that a thing does not exist, to the antecedent impossibility of its existence.

It is important, however, to remember that the existence of a miraculous exception does not annul or destroy the existence of the law in physical matters, as it would do in the mathematical or metaphysical order. Rather is the continued existence of the law the very condition of the miraculous nature of the exceptional fact. Were there no laws of nature there could be no miracles. St. Thomas reminds us that "although God may produce an effect outside the operation of its natural cause, He in no way abolishes the regular relation of this cause to effect."

So strong is the objection of Modernists to the concept of God acting "outside" the natural order in the production of a miracle, so tenaciously do they cling to the inviolability of physical law, that they declare every abnormal event *must* be only an instance of a seldom-observed natural law. Thus, a Modernist writes: "If, in the presence of the professors of the faculty of medicine, a leper should be healed by a word, they would seek for natural causes of the cure,

and would in no way see themselves compelled to perceive in this the finger of God." Huxley had said:

If a dead man did come to life, the fact would not be evidence that any law of nature had been violated, but that these laws, even when they express a very long and uniform experience, are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held only as grounds of more or less reasonable expectation.

Anatole France, in an oft-quoted passage, says that supposing an amputated limb were instantly restored at some sacred shrine,

An observer of a really scientific mind . . . would not say: "That is a miracle!" He would say: "An observation, up to the present unique, leads one to believe that in circumstances not yet clearly determined, the tissues of the human limbs have the power to grow again—like the claws of a crab . . . but much more rapidly."

This explanation would be accepted by English Modernists in preference to an interpretation by miracle. When confronted with such glaring and unreasonable bias as is revealed by these last three writers, we are tempted to admit that no evidence for miracle could compel their assent. But we deny that their attitude is really scientific.

MIRACLES OF HEALING

We shall consider now the matter of miracles of healing. We may note at once that all established laws of biology must be set aside if we are to admit that there is any biological process which can naturally account for the *sudden* restoration of a broken limb, the cure of a deformed leper, or the raising of the dead. To say that these things can happen "naturally" is suicidal on the lips of a scientist, precisely because natural laws, well established in science, are definitely opposed to their happening. Certain physical laws are known for certain: we know that no modern discovery can invalidate them. Nature would have to change before they would cease to be true.

Thus, to appeal to unknown forces of nature in such cases is futile. It is unscientific to say that because the progress of science has taught us how to fly, to hear by "wireless," etc., therefore *perhaps* it will one day teach us how to raise the dead or restore deformed lepers by a word. We can be sure of some things which nature *cannot* do, though we may not be able to enumerate all that it *can* do.

The fallacy in this appeal from present progress to future discoveries is in this, that no present-day discovery has contradicted the certain, known laws of science—it has but supplemented them.

As long as the laws of biology hold, large masses of diseased and destroyed cellular tissue will never be *instantly* restored by natural processes. Within limits, the speed and activity of the *vis medicatrix naturæ* may be helped and hastened by suggestive treatment. Pasteur's wonderful discoveries have taught aseptic surgery to keep out harmful germs, but they have not changed the laws of biology or introduced new vital forces or made *instantaneous* cures of organic lesions possible—save by miracle. Of this we are sure because we *know* how grave lesions are gradually restored—by successive processes of cell-building. Such processes *essentially* need time.

THE GOSPEL CURES

What then of Christ's cures of disease? The old Victorian rationalistic critics decided that all the accounts of such cures must be carefully dissected out of the Gospel history—as a surgeon cuts out cancerous tissue from the body. The cures were denied to be facts; for, if they were admitted to be facts, they were necessarily miraculous facts and a miraculous fact was unthinkable to a rationalist critic. These critics, it will be remembered, thought that the dates of the Gospels must be put well into the second century, in order to allow plenty of time for the growth of what they regarded to be merely mythical legends. Step by step they have been driven back from this position, till today Harnack and most of the others are practically in agreement with tradition in the matter of the dates of composition of the Gospels. With regard to the facts recorded, Modernists are now prepared generally to admit the facts, but to deny them to be miracles. They seek to give a natural explanation to the facts. Thus the Rev. Percy Grant said: "In the miracles of healing, many of the laws employed by Christ have today been made known to us, but we recognize clearly that such works are not contrary to, but in accordance with, law."

Long ago, even Strauss had said: "The power of Jesus to work miracles must be considered only as a *higher kind*

of natural force, a healing power which, even if not met with elsewhere, lies within the sphere of human nature."

The Rev. J. M. Thompson, author of a revolutionary work on "The Miracles of the New Testament," which created a stir in England ten years ago, says of Christ's healing power: "There is probably not one of the cures [narrated in St. Mark] which is not explicable, or, *if we knew the original facts*, would not be explicable, as an instance of faith healing." *La foi qui guérit* of Charcot has been developed, till today it is put forward as the final explanation of all the Gospel cures. Personality strongly developed on Christ-like lines is said to be naturally capable of producing results such as Christ effected. Thus an American, Dr. Leighton Parks, encourages us to hope that even in the case of miracles over inanimate matter, the natural power of the human spirit may manifest complete mastery. He says:

It may be that the days will come when it shall seem to be as natural to walk on the waters or multiply loaves and fishes, as it now seems to heal the sick in the way the Gospel declares that they were healed in the day of Jesus. But that will be to eliminate miracles, not by denying them, but by understanding them.

Such optimistic anticipations are without the slightest foundation in observed facts. The cures narrated in the Gospels are different in kind and not merely in degree, from the cures effected by psychotherapy. A "faith-healer's" cures by suggestion are only sudden in the cases where functions are restored that have been lost through some nervous or mental cause and where there is no *organic* disease present as the cause of the functional disability. Psychotherapy can, at best, only help towards the *gradual* restoration of decayed organic tissue. Now, the cures wrought by Christ were not solely the cures of nervous complaints nor were they effected gradually. They are not paralleled by the cures of blindness, deafness, or paralysis due to "shell shock" in the War, which doctors have learnt to cure suddenly in some cases, by a strong suggestion, or more gradually by psychoanalysis. Nothing that we are learning in modern psychotherapy is even approaching the quasi-creative cures, such as instant restoration of the lost tissues in a leper's flesh; nor is there any valid reason for thinking that we shall ever be able to work such wonders. Christ

was not merely a "Super-Coué," nor have the progressive studies of Charcot, Bernheim, and Babinski really advanced us one step in the direction of a naturalistic explanation of the Gospel miraculous cures. Still less have they any bearing on the miracles over inanimate nature, such as the stilling of the storm on the lake, and the feeding of the five thousand in the desert. With regard to the latter, the most radical English critic, the Rev. J. D. Major, D.D, says that the *fact* of feeding of the multitude is critically uncontested, and that *at present* the critics find themselves unable to explain how it was done! It is strange that they have not yet suggested that it was a case of collective hallucination—of Christ hypnotizing the five thousand into the belief that they had a substantial meal! Quite recently a German rationalist's explanation has been popularized by an English Modernist. He says that it was just a case of "food hoarding": those in the crowd who had plenty were shamed into sharing out their supplies by the example of the Apostles who gave away their own meagre supply, and so there was some for all without any creative act of Christ's.

WHAT DID CHRIST THINK?

One most important consideration must not be omitted in studying the subject of the Gospel miracles, viz., what Christ Himself thought of His works. Christ clearly believed that He was exercising powers which were more than human when He worked His miracles. He confidently appeals to His "works" and "signs" to prove to the Jews that He was their Messiah. I need not quote here the passages where this appeal is made. They are familiar to all who read these pages.

Is it conceivable that Christ was ignorant of the true nature of the powers He was exercising? Modernists dare not blasphemously accuse Him of "bluffing" the Jews. The character of Christ is the final criterion of His works.

The facts, then, happened as recorded, and the facts are the result of the exercise of super-human, Divine powers. The author of "Ecce Homo," Professor Seely, wrote years ago:

Miracles play so important a part in Christ's scheme, that any theory which would represent them as entirely due to the imagination of His followers or of a later age destroys the credibility

of the documents not partially, but wholly, and leaves Christ a personage as mythical as Hercules.

The "perfectly human, non-miraculous Christ" of Modernism is the real "mythical" Christ! The "non-miraculous" Christ of Modernism could never have been the Christ, belief in whose Godhead and certainty of whose Resurrection inspired the Apostles with courage to convert the pagan world and die a martyr's death. The Divine pre-existing Son of God who became incarnate of the Virgin Mother, who proved His claims by a genuine exercise of Divine powers, who died for us and who rose gloriously from the dead, leaving the tomb empty, who ascended into Heaven—and who remains "Emmanuel" with us on our Altars—HE is the real "Jesus of history"! The Catholic Creed is the reasonable expression of the Divinely authenticated revelation that "the Word became Flesh and dwelt amongst us."

Liberty of Conscience

T. M. BURKE

*A radio address from the Catholic Broadcasting Station, Sydney, Australia, reprinted from the Melbourne "Tribune,"
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THE title of this talk may, to many of my fellow-Australians, sound abstract and as if I propose to treat of things unpractical. It is believed by most people, I think, that liberty of conscience has long since been established as a principle and incorporated not alone into the laws of our country but into the every-day lives of our people, dominating their attitudes one towards another, and pervading community life generally. The necessity for inviting attention to the principle in such circumstances would not appear apparent, and I could conceive of my subject being thought uninteresting, abstract, archaic. Perhaps, too, some of my co-religionists may deem me unnecessarily provocative in my selection of a theme. I admit that substantially the facts are as assumed by those who think as I have just mentioned, but with one important exception, and that in the domain of things religious—religious conviction. I feel, therefore, that when I have concluded this talk it will be

seen there are many advances yet to be made in the public laws and in the ideas and actions of a large number of Australian citizens before that full and complete liberty which is the ultimate end of all law shall reign in this Commonwealth.

It would be well if I were to open with a profession of my faith Catholic and Australian. My religion is that of the Catholic Church—Catholicism pure and unalloyed as taught by the infallible head of the Catholic Church, the successor of St. Peter, the Pope and Bishop of Rome. My civil and political faith is that of the Commonwealth of Australia as a free, self-governing British Dominion—Australianism purest and brightest, and yielding in strength and loyalty to my native country to none other Australian. Between my religious beliefs and my civil and political allegiance, between my creed and my country, I have never found any contradiction or fundamental discord. I have never found it necessary to qualify in the faintest manner my absolute loyalty to the one when giving of my best in service to the other. And this is but consistent with the teaching of the Catholic Church. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's" is definite teaching from a source that permits of no argument. The late illustrious Pope Leo XIII, in one of his Encyclicals writes:

God has divided the government of the human race between two principalities—the ecclesiastical and the civil, one with authority over the Divine and the other over human things. Each is supreme in its own sphere. Each has fixed limits within which it moves. Each is circumscribed to its own orbit within which it lives and works in its own native right.

The position of the Catholic Church and consequently of Catholics in relation to their nation or state is thus defined in clearest terms by the highest authority.

TRIBUTE TO GREAT AUSTRALIANS

Those big Australians who moulded our Constitution and gave practical shape to the Federal idea were determined that the instrument they would devise as our national charter should ensure or make possible the development of the widest personal liberty to every citizen of our country in every phase of human activity. Perhaps I might

be permitted to pay tribute to those great men. We are probably too close to their days to place in its true perspective the great achievement that was theirs, but we should never fail to express our appreciation of their gift, which is our heritage. The best expression of our gratitude would be the dedication of our lives in service to God and country, ever watchful of any intrusion upon the liberty which the Constitution confers, and thus preserving the traditions so firmly established by its founders. Section 116 of the Commonwealth Constitution reads: "The Commonwealth cannot make any law establishing any religion or for imposing any religious observance or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion and no religious test shall be required as the qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth." This would appear to go even further than the Constitution of the United States, which reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." [The speaker failed to add the provision in Article VI of the U. S. Constitution: "... no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."—Ed.] It gives constitutional safeguards to the rights of conscience and was a distinct step in the ensuring of religious freedom within the Commonwealth. The flag of the new nation must be unsullied by religious persecutions and there must be no discrimination on that account so far as the laws are concerned, as between citizens who may differ in religion.

NO POWER BUT FROM GOD

It may be interesting at this stage, when referring to this particular section of our Constitution, to point out the teaching of the Catholic Church as to forms of government as defined by the illustrious Leo XIII, who writes:

There is no power but from God. The right to command, however, is not in itself linked to any one form of government. One or the other form the commonwealth may rightly give to itself provided such be really promotive of the common welfare. . . . No reason is there why the Church should prefer one form of government to another, provided the form that is chosen be just in itself and favorable to the common good. Therefore, the rule of justice being duly observed the people are free to adopt that form of government which befits their temper or best accords with their traditions and customs.

So far as Australia is concerned, the people are divided in matters of religious belief and hence what alternative had the framers of the Constitution if the country belongs to the whole of the people, in equity towards all, to its people as one people, to solemnly decree as they did—equal rights to all religions and privileges to none.

The establishment of the principle in the Constitution is one thing—its universal acceptance and practice by all citizens quite another.

I acknowledge frankly and unequivocally the courteous and respectful consideration generally shown to the Catholic religion in Australia at the present day. This is but as it should be. It was not always so, and the present position is appreciated by the Catholic people.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that there is still a remnant of the old religious persecution which works in a more refined way than of old against the economic, social and political interests of Catholics.

HOW DIFFERENTIATION IS PRACTISED

It is a fact that in many business concerns—large and small—the religious test, undoubtedly to the detriment of Catholic applicants, is still applied, sometimes openly but generally by inquiry as to the place of education or of the antecedents of the applicants. It is always difficult to prove such matters, but I am speaking from first-hand knowledge of cases of the kind proved beyond doubt, and in some acknowledged by the management with a promise of amendment in the future. Generally it is found that the test is the work of some manager, secretary, or departmental executive, and not the policy of the company.

The number of positions in commerce and industry where it is absolutely imperative that the appointee shall be of this or that religious belief is but a minute fraction. In the overwhelming majority of cases the test cannot be justified. It is unjust and, particularly when applied to boys and girls seeking a career, positively cruel. The man who inflicts it is a poor citizen.

In matters social, too, there is room for improvement. There is still a large number of people who reckon the Catholic socially inferior. The reasons for this attitude are obscure. In most cases it is probably the vestige of a bad tradition. The point is that the people who adopt the pose

consider it perfectly satisfactory, and in analyzing the rest of their make-up it would be hard to find anything else so unsportsmanlike and so unfair, indeed, so unpatriotic. Some of this class are not prepared even to tolerate Catholics, and, in applying the punishment, feel a glow of satisfaction. I appeal to these fellow-citizens to review their outlook. Let them analyze it and say if it harmonizes with the sanity of their views in most other respects.

There is another class who give an irritating form of toleration to Catholics. You will hear them say that from knowledge of or acquaintance with some particular Catholic they "don't mind Catholics at all." I leave them to apply the ethics of good taste to this patronizing attitude which in similar circumstances would be hurtful to any manly man.

There should be no preferment and no discrimination on religious grounds practised by anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic. We should each have consideration one for another, and the golden rule of doing to others as we would wish to be done by them is still an excellent code.

THE EDUCATION INJUSTICE

There is one outstanding infringement on the liberty of conscience of Catholics in Australia which is becoming every year a more crushing burden. I put it to our non-Catholic fellow-Australians that its continuance does not do them credit if they are the freedom-loving people they claim, and which we believe them to be. I refer to the financial attitude of the State towards the Catholic school.

Catholics have at least done their part in the development and shaping of Australia's national life. In public affairs the names of men who were or are unswerving in their allegiance to the Catholic Faith and have done or are doing great things for Australia will readily occur to the minds of those who study the course of events. In commerce we have done our part towards erecting a fabric of economic stability. In the domain of things cultural and artistic Catholic names are prominent, particularly in the literary sphere, where the Catholic influence has, if more implicit than explicit, been always pervasive. In the opening up and making fertile of the great areas of pastoral and agricultural country Catholic men and women have been amongst the sturdiest of the pioneers. As John O'Brien puts it:

Where the nation is a-building in the hearts of splendid men
There's a little Irish mother always there.

In the crisis of war Catholics did their part. But of all the contributions of Catholics to Australian life the Catholic school has been the greatest and most important.

We Catholics have a legitimate complaint; not alone that we are doubly taxed for education, but that our claim for reimbursement by the State for the secular work done in our schools from the taxes which we ourselves have paid for the purpose is not even examined by the overwhelming majority of our fellow-citizens.

Surely an insistent claim by an important section of the people who have proved their sincerity by putting their hands deep into their pockets merits notice and investigation by the whole of the electorate. Surely in a democracy there is a binding obligation on every elector intelligently to inform himself on such an important issue. Knowing our fellow-citizens as I do, I believe that, if they realized that the effect of their indifference is to deny complete liberty of conscience to their Catholic fellows, they would make an approach towards righting the injustice.

THE CATHOLIC CLAIM

Let us examine the basis of the Catholic educational claim. It goes right to the foundation of things. It is bound up with the purpose of our existence. Education was defined by a great rationalist (Herbert Spencer) as "a preparation for complete living." The Catholic and Christian philosophy of life—the old teaching upon which Christian civilization was erected—is that God created men to know, love and serve Him on earth for a period of time, indefinite but more or less short, and to see and enjoy Him in heaven for eternity. Time and eternity! Finite and infinite! Our life on earth is thus but a period of trial and probation, a preparation for eternal life—heaven if we deserve it; hell if we do not. This preparation consists in knowing our rights and duties towards God and our neighbor and acting in accordance with them. Education being "a preparation for complete living," reason dictates that some due proportions should be preserved between the earthly and the eternal. Education, in other words, should be well-balanced in relation to its end. It will attach right importance relatively to all the obligations and necessities,

spiritual and temporal, of men's earthly and eternal lives. It will promote the harmonious development of the child—mentally, morally, and physically. Any system of education short of this will not satisfy the Catholic conscience. There are those who do not agree with this philosophy. They are free as against their fellow-citizens to differ, but they must not deny the right of the Catholic to give full effect to theirs, that is, if they believe in liberty of conscience. There are those, too, who agree with the Christian philosophy of libe but who differ from Catholics as to the necessity for the religious school. They, too, are free as against their Catholic neighbors to differ, but they must not deny liberty to Catholics, that is, they, through the State in which all are members, must not, because they are a majority, impose a financial burden on Catholics for insistence on their right and duty to practise their conscientious belief.

THE STATE AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING

The child belongs to the parent. "Paternal authority can neither be abolished nor absorbed by the State, for it has the same source as life itself." The parent has the right and duty of educating the child—the State has the right only of supervising so that the child receives an efficient education that will fit him for good and loyal citizenship and the carrying on of the national life. It has no right in justice or reason to compel the parent—either directly or indirectly, by the imposition of a penalty—to send the child to this or that school. It must respect the conscience of the parent which is antecedent to the State, and which he does not and cannot forfeit or qualify by membership of the State. It has no right in justice to compel any body of parents to pay twice over for the secular education which is necessary for the child, and which is required by the State. To say that the State provides elementary schools for all, and that, if schools with a definitely religious atmosphere are required, they must be paid for, is untrue and unjust. It is untrue because the Catholic conscience says the schools provided are "not for all," and that must be deferred to if liberty of conscience is to be practised and not merely talked of. It is unjust because it compels Catholics to pay for the State system which they cannot use, except under extreme

necessity, and, in addition, compels them to pay again for that which their conscience demands.

THE RIGHT OF CATHOLICS

Catholics have answered the supreme test. They have put their hands into their pockets to the extent of many millions of pounds. They will continue to do so as long as the majority of the Australian people perpetuate the present injustice, but surely this will not be for long now. Surely our people will not much longer impose a severe financial penalty on conscience. Surely they will not much longer deny to Catholics the injustice that is done them practically throughout the rest of the British Empire, notably in England, Scotland, Canada and South Africa.

Catholics ask that out of the taxes paid to the Government by them for educational purposes there shall be reimbursed the cost of the secular work done for the State in the Catholic schools. The basis of the reimbursement, or the manner in which it shall be paid, such as a per-capita grant or direct payment of salaries of teachers and maintenance costs, are details which will be easy of solution once the determination to do justice has been reached.

We have yet, then, to make some considerable advances before complete liberty of conscience reigns in Australia. It is demanded not because it is expedient or even alone because it is just, but because it lies at the very foundation of freedom. It might logically be expected from Australians, because the pioneers who first peopled this country came to escape the tyrannies, oppressions, and injustices that were suffered in the older countries of the world. They came to set up a democracy where liberty would have meaning for all the people. Our country, too, has led the world in many social reforms. Its legislation, in many respects, is in advance of that of other nations, but whilst the present severe educational injustice is imposed on Catholics, for them Australia is not yet free.

What we demand for ourselves we ask for all, and I think I can speak for my co-religionists to a man when I say that we will range ourselves alongside any and every section of the community in defence of their freedom of conscience, should it ever be threatened.